

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04

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TO AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, LI, US

SUBJECT: AALC IN LIBERIA

REF: MONROVIA 2721

SUMMARY: THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN LABOR CENTER (AALC) HAS BEEN APPROACHED BY GOL AND THE UNITED WORKERS CONGRESS (UWC) TO ASSIST IN RESOLVING UWC-CIO DISPUTE. AALC WOULD BE WILLING UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES TO ASSIST. END SUMMARY.

1. FYI: ACCORDING TO PAT O'FARRELL, AALC EXEC. DIRECTOR, HE WAS APPROACHED BY ETHELBERT COOPER. UNDER SECRETARY OF LABOR, YOUTH AND SPORTS, AT RECENT AFRICAN LABOR MINISTERS' CONFERENCE AND REQUESTED TO ASSIST IN RESOLVING CIO/UWC SPLIT. COOPER SAID CHARGES AGAINST GRAY AND PRATT HAD BEEN FILED WITH LABOR DEPT, BUT CIO HAD ASKED
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TIME TO RESOLVE ISSUE INTERNALLY. AFTER FOUR WEEKS OF NO

CIO ACTION, PROBLEM RETURNED TO LABOR DEPT WHERE IT NOW RESTS. LABOR DEPT APPARENTLY WOULD PREFER AMICABLE RESOLUTION OF GRAY/PRATT PROBLEM WITHOUT NECESSITY OF COURT ACTION.

2. O'FARRELL RESPONDED THAT MAIN INTEREST OF AALC LAY IN HELPING LABOR MOVEMENT, NOT DEFENDING GRAY AND PRATT. WOULD HOPE THAT IN VIEW OF PAST SERVICES TO LIBERIAN LABOR, GRAY AND PRATT, IF IN FACT GUILTY OF "MALFEASANCE OF OFFICE, COULD RECEIVE SYMPATHETIC TREATMENT.

3. JOHNNY THOMPSON, UWC REP AT LABOR MINISTERS' CONFERENCE, ALSO APPROACHED O'FARRELL. THOMPSON REQUESTED AALC TRADE UNION ASSISTANCE, MAINTAINING UWC RELATIONSHIP WITH WFTU/SOVIETS MADE NECESSARY BY ABSENCE OF AID FROM ANY OTHER SOURCE. NOTHING IDEOLOGICAL IN ACCEPTANCE OF WFTU/SOVIET AID. WOULD FOREGO THIS AID IF AALC FORTHCOMING. SAID PRESENT SITUATION, WITH AALC HELPING CIO BUT NOT UWC, WAS DE FACTO INTERFERENCE IN INTERNAL LIBERIAN TRADE UNION DISPUTE. O'FARRELL RESPONDED THAT CIO HAD BEEN FOUNDER OF LIBERIAN TRADE UNION MOVEMENT. AALC INTEREST LAY IN PROMOTING WELFARE OF WORKERS AND CIO HAD BEEN MOST SATISFACTORY CHANNEL FOR THIS AID IN THE PAST. AALC COULD NOT SIMPLY WALK AWAY FROM CIO NOW THAT IT IS EXPERIENCING DIFFICULTIES. HOWEVER, AALC NOT IRREVOCABLY COMMITTED TO BACKING ANY ONE INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP. COMMITMENT LAY IN HELPING LIBERIAN WORKERS AND TRADE UNION MOVEMENT.

4. O'FARRELL TOLD COOPER AND THOMPSON THAT IF GOL REQUESTS, AALC WOULD BE WILLING TO FUNNEL AID THROUGH GOL-LED TRADE UNION EDUCATION CENTER WHILE CIO/UWC SITUATION SORTS ITSELF OUT. WOULD BE WILLING, IF SPECIFICALLY REQUESTED, TO ACT AS MEDIATOR. O'FARRELL BELIEVES THAT COOPERATION AT LEVEL OF TRADE UNION EDUCATION WOULD FACILITATE EVENTUAL MERGER. HE REALIZES THAT SINCE CURRENT CIO/UWC DISPUTE IS BASICALLY A PERSONALITY CLASH, GRAY AND PRATT MAY HAVE TO RETIRE FROM CIO AND OTHER POSITION FOUND FOR WALKER IF MERGER IS TO HAVE A CHANCE OF SUCCEEDING.

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5. O'FARRELL SAID THERE IS A POSSIBILITY THAT MINISTER OF LABOR PEAL MAY MEET WITH AFL-CIO EXECUTIVE SECRETARY LANE KIRKLAND AT JUNE ILO CONFERENCE IN GENEVA TO DISCUSS THIS PROBLEM. END FYI. SISCO

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